

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 3194

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, AU
SUBJ: APPROACH FROM INDIAN SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER FERNANDES TO
US THROUGH KREISKY

1. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION ON APRIL 21 CONCERNING RESULTS OF
SOCIALIST SUMMIT IN AMSTERDAM (APRIL 16-17), CHANCELLOR KREISKY
INFORMED CHARGE THAT HE HAD HAD PRIVATE MEETING AT SUMMIT WITH
GEORGE FERNANDES (INDIAN SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER AND MEMBER OF
CURRENT INDIAN GOVERNMENT), WHO REGISTERED INDIAN'S STRONG
DESIRE TO DISENGAGE FROM PRO-SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY STANCE.
KREISKY SAID HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY FERNANDES (1) TO INFORM USG
THAT NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO DEVELOP NEW FOREIGN
POLICY ORIENTATIONS, AND (2) TO ADVISE INDIAN SOCIALIST PARTY
HOW BEST APPROACH MIGHT BE MADE TO USG REGARDING PRACTICAL
MOVES TO DEVELOP CLOSER RELATIONS. KREISKY SAID HE TOLD
FERNANDES TO CONSIDER USING HIS (FERNANDES') PERSONAL
RELATIONSHIP TO KENNETH GALBRAITH TO ESTABLISH HIGH-LEVEL
CONTACTS WITH NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION. CHANCELLOR THOUGHT
THAT FERNANDES WILL FOLLOW UP ON HIS SUGGESTION.

2. KREISKY SAID FERNANDES TOLD HIM THAT CURRENTLY
EVOLVING INDIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP IS ONE EXAMPLE OF
HOW INDIA IS MOVING AWAY FROM PRO-SOVIET STANCE.
FERNANDES STATED THAT VISITS OF SOCIALIST PARTY
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DELEGATIONS WILL BE EXCHANGED IN THE NEAR FUTURE,
AND THAT AN UPGRADING OF RELATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS
IS ALSO BEING PREPARED.

3. ACCORDING TO FERNANDES, NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS
ALSO SEEKING TO OPEN CHANNELS TO AND IMPROVE RELATIONS
WITH PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA BUT IS BEING EXTREMELY

CAUTIONS IN ITS APPROACH.

4. KREISKY DESCRIBED FERNANDES AS OUTSPOKEN SOCIALIST WHO HAD STRONGLY OPPOSED MRS. GANDHI AND WHO, AS RESULT, HAD BEEN HARASSED AND SUBSEQUENTLY IMPRISONED. KREISKY ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF HAD RECEIVED CAUSTIC LETTERS FROM MRS. GANDHI COMPLAINING ABOUT INTERCESSION BY SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND KREISKY ON BEHALF OF FERNANDES, WHO WAS CALLED IN LETTERS "RADICAL TROUBLE-MAKER AND ENEMY OF PEOPLE." ACCORDING TO KREISKY, FERNANDES, WHO IS MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS IN NEW GOVERNMENT, SAID HE IS SUPPORTING NEW FOREIGN MINISTER ALTHOUGH HE HIMSELF WOULD PREFER TO BE FOREIGN MINISTER. KREISKY DESCRIBED FERNANDES AS BIT NAIVE AND ROMANTIC IN HIS POLITICAL OUTLOOK BUT AS PROBABLY HAVING CAPABILITY OF ADAPTING TO REALITIES OF RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNING.

5. KREISKY CONCLUDED WITH OBSERVATION THAT SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL OBVIOUSLY WELCOMES CHANGE IN INDIAN GOVERNMENT -- DEVELOPMENT WHICH SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL TO DO MORE TO HELP ON INDIAN SCENE. AT SAME TIME, CURRENT SITUATION IN INDIA IS DIFFICULT ONE WHICH, IF IT IS TO BE OVERCOME, WILL REQUIRE MAJOR HELP OF VARIOUS KINDS FROM WEST.MEEHAN

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